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# MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH OPINION OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

GILLIES AND *Blackwood's Magazine*.

### II.

In Vol. I of the *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1901, p. 252 ff.) mention is made for the first time in contributions bearing on this subject of Gillies as an interpreter of German literature. His activity as expressed in *Blackwood's Magazine* is, however, barely touched upon, and what is said of it is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it is but a repetition of Gillies' own statements (*Memoirs*, II, 263), which, as shown before,<sup>1</sup> are not always reliable. His *Memoirs* state for example<sup>2</sup> (*loc. cit.*) that the "Horae Germanicae" (which were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*) from 1819 to 1827 are all by him, except Goethe's *Faust*<sup>3</sup> and a tragedy of La Motte Fouqué.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact the last of the "Horae Germanicae" appeared in August, 1828, and at least six of them were not from his pen, as will be seen presently.

The very first of these studies, entitled *Guilt; A Tragedy by Müllner*, was written by John Gibson Lockhart, as Gillies himself acknowledges elsewhere in his *Memoirs* (II, 248). The second, *The Ancestress* by Grillparzer, based, like the first, on a translation of Gillies, should, I believe, be likewise accredited to Lockhart. At any rate an editorial note seems to indicate that it cannot be by Gillies. "Horae Germanicae XIII,"<sup>5</sup> devoted to a discussion of Schlenkert's *Rudolph von Habs-*

*burg*, is signed S. A.<sup>6</sup> As the other studies bear no signature, or the letters G. or P. K.,<sup>7</sup> it is safe to assume that this one was written not by Gillies, especially as it does not bear the peculiarities of his style. The criticism of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, which forms No. XVI of the "Horae Germanicae," can hardly be attributed to Gillies. It does not seem plausible that he would speak of the excellent translations of Mr. R. P. Gillies (pp. 377-78, *Blackw. Mag.*, Oct. 1823). There may also be some doubt as to his authorship of No. XVIII (Sept. 1824) and No. XXI (June, 1825), which contain a discussion of Lessing's *Laocoon*<sup>8</sup> and Wieland's *Aristippus* respectively. Gillies was but little interested in the critical and philosophical writings of Germany. This accounts for the fact that those "Horae Germanicae" that are unquestionably his, deal almost exclusively with the German drama.

As Nos. III and IV, *The 29th of February* by Müllner and *The Cypress Crown* by Caroline de la Motte Fouqué, consist of translations rather than critical remarks,<sup>9</sup> we may turn at once to Müllner's *King Yugurd* (Nos. VI and VII, July-Aug., 1820). Gillies considers this the greatest and most affecting of his works and adds: "Unless we be very greatly mistaken, the skilfulness of Müllner's exposition of the groundwork will sufficiently delight our more critical readers, while the lovers of poetry and passion will find enough of both here to make amends for all they may miss." In the commanding and calculating, crafty and courageous character of Yugurd Gillies suspects

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Sarah Austin, who was much interested in German literature and occasionally contributed to *Blackwood's*.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Kempferhausen, the name by which Gillies was known to the readers of *Blackwood's*.

<sup>8</sup> Poole's *Index* attributes this to De Quincey. I may say in passing that it names Gillies as the author of all the other "Horae Germanicae."

<sup>9</sup> Of Müllner's piece it is said that there is great sublimity and great beauty in the idea which he has so well illustrated.

<sup>1</sup> *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XVII, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Zeiger in *Stud. z. vergl. Litgesch.*

<sup>3</sup> No. V, June, 1820. Cf. Andrew Lang, *Life and Letters of J. G. Lockhart*, 1897, I, 245.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pilgrimage*, No. XII, Aug. 1821.

<sup>5</sup> This is wrongly numbered in *Blackw. Mag.*, as are also Nos. XIV and XXI.

Müllner of having embodied some of his own conceptions concerning the character of Napoleon (p. 413).<sup>10</sup> In the reading of this work Gillies says that he felt as an individual who for the first time in his life finds himself in the heart of the Swiss or Scottish Highlands, in a dark, misty day of October, when every surrounding object, whether living or inanimate, assumes a character new, gigantic, and even supernatural (p. 546). In a discussion of Müllner's *Albaneserin* (Aug. 1822), Gillies claims for this author that no one understands better than he the connection of human passions and emotions with the influences of the outward world; and yet the reviewer is ready to admit that Müllner is inferior to Grillparzer, in whose *Ahnfrau* are some of the noblest examples of pure and concentrative imagination to be found in any author or in any languages (!). If the stage directions were to be left out, the *Albaneserin* would read somewhat like a tragedy of Alfieri! Finally Gillies bids Müllner remember that Schiller never equalled that scene in the *Robbers* wherein Moor, amid wild forest scenery, contemplates and apostrophizes the setting sun.<sup>11</sup>

Seven years before the *Life of Theodor Körner* (translated from the German by G. F. Richardson, 1827) was published in London, Gillies had introduced to the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine* two of Körner's dramas, *Rosamunda* (Oct. 1820) and *Zriny* (Feb. 1821), at a time when the patriot poet was known in France scarcely by name.<sup>12</sup> Gillies was justified in saying: "On our shores the merits of Körner are yet wholly unknown." He believes that his works would have done honor to the most mature and practiced genius. Of *Rosamunda* he says that it is distinguished by its poetical beauty, that it is a most affecting tragedy, admirably adapted to scenic representation. The last scenes of acts III and IV he considers the best in the whole play. The garden scene somehow reminds

him of a highly poetic passage of Mr. Shelley. "We seem vividly to behold around us the fading flowers of summer, that by their touching associations render so much more impressive the expressions of her [Rosamunda's] grief. There is evidenced in these few short speeches of the heroine a stilly mood of resigned meditation and voluntary suffering, accompanied with a visionary and creative sensibility, which no poet has, by the most laborious and artificial efforts, excelled." He thinks that the death-scene in the fourth act is, in some respects, by far the finest in any tragedy, "less horribly impressive than some, but leaving on the mind an influence more lasting and salutary."—The play of *Zriny* he believes admirably adapted to the tumultuous spirit of the times.

In succeeding studies, Gillies briefly characterizes the works of two contemporary authors who have now fallen into well-deserved oblivion: *Darkness*, by Raupach (Jan. 1821) and *The Light Tower*, by Houvald (Jan. 1823). While he criticises Houvald because of his choice of frightful and repelling subjects, he has words of praise and encouragement for Raupach. In his manner he finds, however, more of inconsistency and inequality than he has ever met with in any other German author.

His comments on the next drama, Klingemann's *Faust* (June, 1823), are of greater interest. He makes bold to say that it is in some respects even more truly German than Goethe's *Faust*. Though Klingemann makes no use of scenery, his work is "highly dramatic and admirably suited for the German theatre, insomuch that we do not know any production evincing more of what is technically called stage effect." In the character of Katha, says Gillies, Klingemann has a vantage ground over Goethe.

Schiller, whose *Fiesco* and *Wilhelm Tell* are reviewed in 1824 and 1825, receives boundless praise. Not one of his plays is said to have more "capabilities" of being rendered effective and interesting in another language than the *Conspiracy of Fiesco*. Gillies says of it: "From beginning to end it exhibits a bustle and variety of incident and situation, with a passionate liveliness of dialogue, and strength in the delineation of character, which are truly admirable." Yet "with much energy it combines many faults."

<sup>10</sup> A similar suspicion he expresses in his review of *König Ottokar* (see below).

<sup>11</sup> Coleridge said in the preface to his translation of *Wallenstein*: "If we except the scene of the setting sun in the *Robbers*, I know of no part in Schiller's Plays which equals the first scene [now the third] of Act V of *Wallenstein's Tod*."

<sup>12</sup> Cf. V. Rossel, *Histoire des Relations Littéraires entre la France et l'Allemagne*, 1897, p. 216, *et pass.*

Gillies points out that the catastrophe (especially the accidental death of the heroine, by the hand of her husband) seems exactly calculated to provoke the censures of minor critics. This he thinks could be changed, as also the dialogues regarding the intended fate of Bertha, so as not to prove offensive to the over-fastidious delicacy of English readers. A refacimento of *Fiesco* would be more difficult to make than one of the *Robbers*, which if properly condensed, and wrought down to that level, which is suited to the powers of English actors, and the so-called refined taste of English audiences, would obtain great applause. Through the whole play the character of the Moor, says the critic in the course of his review, is well kept up, and affords one of the best specimens of a mercenary villain that have yet been produced. Scenes 12, 13 and 14 of Act iv Gillies believes to be unrivalled. The first of them, he continues, depends more on the effect of situation than on language; and the character of Julia is, perhaps, too coarsely drawn, but the succeeding dialogue between Fiesco and Leonora has every possible beauty.

Gillies' comments on *Wilhelm Tell* will be of as much interest to readers in 1902 as they were to those of 1825. He maintains that this play is best calculated to be introduced to the knowledge of his countrymen, as one of the best, as most consonant with British taste and feelings. It seems to him that the imitation of Shakespeare in *Wilhelm Tell* is occasionally too obvious to escape the most careless reader. The opening scenes, however, are not at all Shakespearean, but very German. The play as a whole contains "great and numerous beauties but also strange faults."

The critic's remarks on particular scenes may be of especial interest. He says that Attinghausen's exhortations (II, 1) to patriotism, and eulogies of Switzerland, despite their prolixity, are spirited and poetical, and that the Rütli scene (II, 2), though somewhat lengthy, if not strikingly dramatic according to our ideas, is interesting by its fragments of Swiss history, tradition, etc. In the scenes where Rudenz and Bertha appear (III, 2), "much ability is shown, as indeed there is in everything Schiller has written. But this love affair appears to us wholly out of place, and rather more à la Française, than we should have expected

from a real German poet." In the "Apfelschusz scene" Gillies sees so much power, so deep and so strong an interest that he experienced some difficulty in compelling himself to insert the extraordinary stage-directions, which he thinks elucidate and disfigure it. He expresses his disapprobation of two points: "The first is, the singular fancy of withdrawing the attention alike of the persons upon the stage and of the audience from the chief character at the moment of his achieving his fearful deed; for what cannot be both acted and looked upon ought not to constitute the principal interest in a drama. The second is, the sort of insinuation that Gessler did not intend finally to enforce his command." Regarding this point he goes on to say: "We conceive this to be done for the purpose of rendering Gessler's character more consonant to human nature. But we must observe, that when an act, of however unaccountable barbarity, is taken from history or tradition, the only legitimate mode of reconciling it with general principles, is by assigning rational motives, found in the character or situation of the agent." The reason for a fifth act he attributes to the fact that the underplot is unfinished, inasmuch as nobody knows what has become of Bertha.

The review of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* (Oct. 1824) shows more real insight than the review of almost any other play in this series. Gillies emphasizes its originality and its spirit of energy and recognizes the great art as well as boldness in the selection of the period and of the hero—a period "which had been most frequently decried as made up of nothing but brutal ignorance on the one side, and brutal oppression on the other" (p. 372). He derives from this drama the great lesson that "in spite of all the sneers of philosophers the elements of virtue and excellence were predominant among those who formed the Gothic institutions of Europe; and secondly, that in spite of all the outcry of demagogues, the modern world has been continually and progressively improving in everything that really concerns the wellbeing of men and of societies."

The works of three other authors are discussed in the "Horae Germanicae." Of Werner's *The Twenty-fourth of February* (Apr. 1827) an altogether absurd estimate is given. It has been reserved for Werner, says Gillies, to produce a work

of tremendous and overpowering interest. "The whole tragedy is a chain so curiously wrought, a web so artfully woven, that by leaving out a link or thread, the whole is irreparably injured. Not one speech is superfluous; we have no Balaam to fill up chasms. Every speech tells, and prepares the reader for what is to follow. As long as the German language lives, Werner will be remembered with respect." It should be borne in mind that contemporary German criticism also assigned a very prominent place to the tragedies of this author.

In the review of Uhland's *Ernest, Duke of Suabia* (Feb. 1827), Gillies displays better literary judgment. He prefaces the article with the remark that this drama, one of a boundless stock of historical plays, discountenances the theory that German plays and novels are all very wild and irregular. He regrets that Uhland, this excellent poet, has produced but few dramas, inasmuch as in the management of that now before us, he has evinced very considerable ability. To mention but one excellence of the play: "even after the death of the hero, Uhland has contrived to keep up some interest in the action."

The third and last author, who is spoken of with much gusto, is Grillparzer. His *Sappho* (Apr. 1826), written in very harmonious blank verse, is thought to be more congenial to English feelings than the *Almfrau*. As its chief beauties Gillies claims the just conception and delineation of character, the admirable portraiture of the workings of the human heart (exhibited alike in the feminine tenderness and delicacy of Sappho's love as in Phaon's originally mad and dazzled admiration of the celebrated poetess), and lastly the rich vein of poetry adorning and vivifying the whole. As one of the blemishes of the play the reviewer points out the discussion between Rhamnes and the faithless lover, as to whether Sappho will, or will not, be dashed to pieces as she falls against a projecting crag of the rocks from which she flung herself.

*King Ottokar's Prosperity and Death* (Sept. 1827) Gillies considers superior in every dramatic requisite to its predecessors. Though the Germans, as he believes, give the preference to Müllner, he cannot help thinking that Grillparzer is superior to his rival in poetic beauty, and powerful, pro-

found, refined conception of character; equal to him in invention and dramatic skill, and inferior only in correct taste. In this indispensable auxiliary to genius he hopes to see Grillparzer improve greatly. In the play before us he "has restrained the luxuriance of his imagination, adopting a style usually esteemed more dramatic, and something of the quaint but energetic simplicity of the period to which his subject belongs. Indeed, the spirit of the age breathes through the whole tragedy. We suspect he was greatly influenced in the selection of his subject by the opportunity offered of portraying in Ottokar much of the spirit of Napoleon during his intoxication of success." Gillies finds fault with the scene in the second act where "the very solemn state of the *Dramatis Personae*, somewhat too solemn indeed for the taste of a British audience, is interrupted by the insane Bertha, in a way which, upon the stage, we should esteem actual impiety" (p. 306). Here is "one of those marks of deficient taste from which few German works are altogether exempt."

The last number of the "*Horae Germanicae*" is devoted to a review of Grillparzer's *The Golden Fleece* (Aug. 1828). This work is considered a more extraordinary performance than *The Ancestress* or *Sappho*. Its chief character, Medea, is throughout admirably conceived, says the critic, and for the most part admirably delineated (p. 300).

The preceding paragraphs have treated of Gillies as a critic; a few words should be added concerning his ability as a translator. His versions do not rank among the best, Walter Scott's estimate of his work notwithstanding.<sup>13</sup> He translates, as a rule, too closely to be idiomatic and poetic at the same time. Occasionally he fails to catch the meaning of a word and then he blunders, of course, most unpardonably. Thus he renders "Ich gehe im Wirthshaus zum Hirsch" (*Gölz*), by "I was going to the venison in the inn.; and "Ich soll dir glauben? Ungerathne, zittre! (*Golden Fleece*), by "I shall believe thee? Tremble, thou unadvised!" Errors of this nature are, however, far from common. Instead of carping at such faults, let us rather remember the useful service Gillies rendered in making the English-speaking

<sup>13</sup> Cf. his *Journal*, Dec. 3, 1825: "Gillies translates extremely well;" and Dec. 15: "Gillies is one of the best translators I know."

public familiar with German literature at a time when his countrymen knew scarcely more than two German authors, Schiller and Goethe, and but one work of each, *The Robbers* and *Werther*.

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*Pandaemonium germanicum*, BY J. M. R. LENZ.

The only commentary on Lenz's satire *Pandaemonium germanicum* is, as far as I know, the one given by A. Sauer in his edition of the work in the eightieth vol. of Kürschner's *Deutsche Nat. Lit.* It seems to me, however, that these notes are somewhat incomplete; in the following article I shall, therefore, try to complete them as much as possible. In quoting the *P. g.* I have in view the edition of Sauer; the first number indicates the page; the second, the line.

#### FIRST ACT.

139, 3: "Der steile Berg."—The conception of a mountain dominates the whole first act. Is it original or borrowed?

The first act, as will be seen later on in detail, is influenced by the five authors: Bodmer, Milton, the writer of *Prometheus*, *Deukalion u. s. R.*, and Chr. H. Schmid. Of course, the idea of a mountain, conceived as the abode of the Muses, is familiar to all connoisseurs of Greek literature; it is, however, probable that Lenz was induced to use the figure by a suggestion from outside. The impulse came to him from the article of Chr. H. Schmid, published November, 1774, in Wieland's *Teutscher Merkur*, titled: "Kritische Nachrichten vom Zustande des deutschen Parnasses." That Lenz was acquainted with the article at the time when he wrote the *P. g.* follows from his epigram to Gotter:

Gotter:

Es wimmelt heutzutag von Sekten  
Auf dem Parnass.

Lenz:

Und von Insekten.

The epigram is first found in a letter to Lavater (April, 1775). Lenz had reason to feel hurt. Schmid's article enumerates the different "Sekten"

of contemporary German poetry and classes Lenz among the followers of Hamann. Lenz took up the subject of a critical review as well as the general conception of a Parnasse, changing it however according to his own views.

To turn to the details of the first act, Schmid's division into different "Sekten" may have caused the first act to be divided into four parts. The last three scenes are called "die Nachahmer" (2), "die Philister" (3), "die Journalisten" (4). The first scene has no title, but it can easily be imagined, that, but for the accusation of utter egotism, Lenz would have called it "die Originale."

The impulse received from Schmid's article was not acted upon before February, 1775. We know that the first scene of the first act was written out before February 20, 1775 (Froitzheim, *Zu Strassburgs St.-u. Drg. Zeit*, 75). That it was not written before February, we can conclude from the similarities with Nicolai's *Freuden des jungen Werthers*, which appeared February, 1775.

In this pamphlet Nicolai writes, apparently referring to Lenz: "Auch sah er . . . dass mehr Stärke des Geistes dazu gehöre . . . als wenn tobende, endlose Leidenschaft ruft, einen jähren Berg (ohn' Absicht) klettern, durch einen unwegsamen Wald einen Pfad (der zu nichts führt) durcharbeiten, durch Dorn und Hecken."<sup>1</sup> Nicolai also uses the expression "Pandaemonium" ("wie ein klein Teufelchen im Pand.")<sup>2</sup> "Schmeiss-fliegen,"<sup>3</sup> (cf. *P. g.*, 144, 10).

In *P. g.*, 144, 12 "Sie (Journalisten) bekommen die Gestalt kleiner Jungen und laufen auf dem hohen Berge herum, Hügelein auf Hügelein ab" reminds one of Nicolai's:<sup>4</sup> "Dass ihr Springinsfelde Werther würdet, damit hat's nicht Not, dazu habt'r'n Zeug nicht" Nicolai speaks of a mountain, which is "jäh," covered by "Dorn und Hecken," which cannot be ascended except by "klettern." Cf. in *P. g.* "steil" (139, 3), "ganz mit Busch überwachsen" (139, 15), "klettern" (139, 20. 140, 6).

Further details of the first act point to an influence of Bodmer's *Noah* upon the *P. g.* There is an apparent resemblance between the first song of *Noah* and the first scene of the first act in *P. g.* on

<sup>1</sup>*D. Nat. Lit.*, vol. 72, 379.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>4</sup>*D. Nat. Lit.*, vol. 72, 369.